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SUBJECT: GUINEAN GOVERNMENT HALTS ELECTIONS PREPARATIONS  
UNTIL CENI IS ESTABLISHED

¶1. (SBU) The Minister of Interior and Security (MIS) has decided to halt all preparations for legislative elections until the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) is operational. In a telephone conversation with poloff on October 12, Elhadj Amadou Bailo Diallo, MIS Secretary General, said that in order to ensure transparency, it is essential that the CENI be fully on board before any further elections preparations are undertaken. Diallo added that the law requires that the CENI be involved in all elections preparations and that any further government activity could jeopardize perceptions of transparency.

¶2. (SBU) When asked about the current status of the CENI, Diallo said that according to the law, the organization technically already exists since the 25 names have been submitted. However, according to Diallo, there is some internal government debate as to whether there must also be an official decree, signed by President Lansana Conte, legitimizing the organization. Diallo stated that everyone will work together to find a solution and he believes that the issue will be resolved in the next two weeks.

¶3. (SBU) Diallo added that the delay gives donor countries such as the United States time to find additional funds to assist with elections.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT. Elections preparations seem to increasingly hinge on the establishment of the CENI, a process that has been slow and fraught with political infighting. Expecting the issue to be resolved in a two-week time frame may not be realistic given recent experience with the process. Embassy will work with the international community to determine an appropriate course of action in order to move past this most recent holdup, which clearly appears to be yet another delay tactic. END COMMENT.  
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